

Washington, D.C. 20505

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Editor
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, CA 90053

Dear Sir:

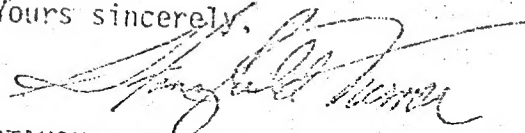
Robert Toth's 30 December article on American Intelligence is flawed in two respects.

FACTS. No article I have read on this subject in the past four years has had more factual errors. For instance, Mr. Toth says I eliminated about 2400 jobs at the CIA, when the true number is less than 200; and that the CIA has 240 lawyers, when our Office of General Counsel has less than one-sixth of that. A simple phone call to our Office of Public Affairs would have set him straight.

BIAS. Much of the article criticizes the changes I made in managing our intelligence. Yet, curiously, the article ends by pointing out that some very desirable results are appearing--more and better young applicants for the CIA; lifting of Congressional restrictions; and more money for intelligence. An unbiased analyst would at least ask if there were not some causal relationship between the changes that were made and the improved results. For instance, you can't recruit more young people to ensure the CIA's future if all the old-timers hang around; you can't persuade the Congress to lift restrictions if you have not demonstrated to them that you are operating in a competent manner; and you are not likely to get the President and the Congress to give you more money unless they value your product and want more of it. Mr. Toth's analysis is about as sound as criticizing a doctor because the medicine he prescribes tastes bad even though it improves the patient.

Two years ago the Soviets expelled Mr. Toth from the Soviet Union alleging he was a CIA agent. I can assure them he was not; neither his research nor his analysis would meet our standards.

Yours sincerely,



STANSFIELD TURNER

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LOS ANGELES TIMES
30 December 1980

Few Bright Spots

CIA 'Mighty Wurlitzer' Is Now Silent

By ROBERT C. TOTH
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—The Soviets knew the schedule of the United States' KH-9 spy satellite to the minute, and when it flew over the Uzbekistan missile center everything was tucked out of sight. But a few hours later, another U.S. satellite the KH-11, passed over the same field and caught an aerospace glider out in plain view—giving this country its first evidence that the Soviets were making a craft similar to the U.S. space shuttle.

In the kind of games modern spymasters play, the Soviets had exposed the secret space glider because they had been tricked into believing the second satellite was electronically "dead." Among other ploys, it was made to seem silent. Instead of transmitting its TV-like pictures down to earth as other satellites do, the KH-11 radioed its pictures up into space—to a communications satellite that relayed them to a U.S. intelligence station halfway around the world. (The deception worked until ex-CIA employee William Kampiles sold the operations manual of the multimillion-dollar KH-11 to the Soviets, for a mere \$3,000.)

Supremacy Misleading

Technological cleverness is the pride of U.S. intelligence—no nation is better at it—and that supremacy can be a source of comfort to the American people as U.S. military vulnerability in the early 1980s puts greater reliance on intelligence to avoid dangerous surprises.

But American supremacy in technical intelligence is profoundly misleading. It is not representative of U.S. intelligence capabilities as a whole but stands in stark contrast. For in every other intelligence field—human spies, analysis of data collected and ability to conduct secret operations—the U.S. intelligence community appears to be dangerously deficient.

"Except for technical surveillance of the Soviet Union," said one highly knowledgeable source, "we're in lousy shape throughout the world." Some examples:

—Human intelligence sources have largely dried up because of leaks. "Some potentially cooperative sources say frankly they are afraid they might find their names in our newspapers," one knowledgeable source said, "and I must say for myself that if I were a Libyan or Pakistani, to say nothing of a Soviet, I would not cooperate today with any American intelligence agency."

Firings, Retirements Costly

—Recent waves of firings and early retirements cost the CIA many hundreds of senior personnel with unique language abilities and regional expertise. In 1978, when Iran's Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi fell, the agency did not have a single regular employee who could speak Persian. A large percentage of the field officers of its Near East division, which includes Southwest Asia, are former employees recalled to temporary duty, according to an informed source.

—In Africa and Latin America, the United States must rely heavily on information supplied by British, French and West German agencies. But cooperation has slowed signifi-

cantly since the congressional and press exposes of CIA abuses and misdeeds in the mid '70s, officials say.

"There are whole lists of cases in which friendly agencies have stopped helping us," one source said.

—Collection of public and semipublic information by U.S. diplomats and military attaches has been significantly slowed, too, as a result of budget cuts. Two-thirds of the attaches of the Defense Intelligence Agency have been eliminated since 1968. Rising U.S. tourism and business interests abroad, particularly in Communist nations, has increasingly diverted American diplomats away from the political and economic reporting that intelligence analysts need.

—Analysis of available information is uneven in quality. "CIA analysts are technically proficient, as in predicting Soviet oil production declines," one national security official said, "but they almost missed the Afghanistan invasion, after watching the Soviet buildup for six months, because they focused on reasons Moscow would not move—detente, SALT II, trade.

"They are biased to predict the ordinary, not surprises," he said.

—The CIA's covert action capability, which once undertook everything from propaganda campaigns to secret wars, has been virtually dismantled.

Hostage Raid Cited

The raid to free U.S. hostages in Iran, for example, would have had a better chance if it had been organized and run by the CIA, according to several intelligence officials as well as one military officer who took part in the ad hoc Pentagon effort.

At a less dramatic level, the CIA's ability to aid insurgent groups short of intervention is almost nonexistent. "If we wanted to help the Afghan 'freedom fighters' with guns," one source said, "there is no supply of untraceable arms, no experienced gunrunners, no transportation assets available readily. And the Soviets know it."

Political covert action, such as planting newspaper stories and aiding sympathetic officials abroad, never was suspended totally by the CIA, even in the Carter Administration. "But it's on a piddling scale," one official said, "and what's left is rather atrophied."

Carter became angry at Cuba's continued use of its troops in Africa after his initial overture to Fidel Castro in 1977 for more normal relations. He ordered accounts of Castro's activities to be disseminated internationally. But most of the machinery for such propagandizing—the "Mighty Wurlitzer" once boasted by the CIA—has deteriorated into rusty silence.

Even the U.S. Information Agency resisted Carter's orders to play up anti-Castro stories. This particularly incensed the President and led to a minor shake-up within that agency, informants said.

Such is the debris left from the unprecedented campaigns against the intelligence and counterintelligence agencies in the government particularly the CIA.

Brought on Themselves

To a considerable degree, the agencies brought it on themselves with foreign and domestic crimes and excesses in the name of national security. As a result, powerful figures in the Carter Administration, including Vice President Walter F. Mondale who served on the Senate committee that publicized CIA abuses, seemed intent initially on punishing the intelligence community.

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"Their approach seemed to be: 'if they don't have the capacity, they can't misuse it,'" according to one knowledgeable source. "The solution should have been better control and accountability of the intelligence community, not emasculation. But Carter sent Adm. Stansfield Turner with orders to 'clean up' the CIA and chop a half billion dollars from the (intelligence) community's budget."

Turner, a Carter classmate at Annapolis, took over as the new director of central intelligence and CIA chief and promptly eliminated 800 jobs almost overnight in 1977 and about that many more in 1978 and 1979. Morale, understandably plummeted.

'Siege Mentality'

"There's still a siege mentality out there," one CIA veteran said. "Almost no one moves without consulting a lawyer these days, and there are lots of them around." Ten years ago the CIA legal staff consisted of six persons. Now it has 240 persons.

Not all of the CIA's troubles are American-made, of course. The Soviet KGB naturally has done all it can to reinforce the image of a "leaky" U.S. intelligence community and government, for example. One way is to exploit the anti-CIA activities of a renegade ex-agent, Phillip Agee, who publishes the names of U.S. agents abroad.

At least one agent has been murdered and others attacked after publication of their names and several have been quietly recalled for fear they were in danger, sources said.

"Even if Agee does not collaborate consciously with the KGB and DGI (Cuban intelligence) they use him," one official said. "The day after he comes out with a list, a Russian will drop it off to the Thai government if it names an American in Bangkok, for example. Newspapers around the world get copies of his lists too fast for them to have traveled by mail."

Turner, in addition to slashing personnel, saved money by focusing technical surveillance on the Soviet Union at the expense of the rest of the world. (Technical surveillance includes photo reconnaissance, radio intercepts, radar monitoring, breaking codes and the like.)

As a result, there is practically no data base now for collecting radio signals from Third World states or Central America," one official said. "We don't know the radio frequencies used by their military, by their politicians—their codes, the patterns of (radio) traffic that might give very important clues about the timing of coups."

Little Analysis Made

Even in Cuba, while the collection of technical data has continued high, there was little detailed analysis of the information until the surprise discovery of the Soviet mini-brigade in 1979.

Then, the National Security Agency, which collects communication intelligence, found in its files evidence from more than a year earlier pointing to the existence of the "brigade."

The problem of ever-growing volumes of information, which the intelligence agencies pay to collect but do not pay to be analyzed, is caused in large part by Congress. "You can get Capitol Hill to budget clever (technical) collection systems quite easily," said one official, "but then they balk at money for analysts."

"The true challenges of the decades ahead lie more in the intellectual gymnastics of coping with the flood of information than in the physical or even sexual gymnastics of latter-day James Bonds," former CIA director William E. Colby said recently.

Despite what intelligence specialists see as a gloomy picture overall, there are some bright spots.

More money generally has been going into intelligence in the last year, including into analysis, with the new perception of the Soviet threat by President Carter after the invasion of Afghanistan.

Another positive sign is the rise in number, enthusiasm and quality of applicants to the CIA. More than half of the new officers last year had advanced degrees, one official said. "But it will be a long time before those fresh Ph.D.'s can substitute for a guy with 15 years experience in the field," he added.

Congress also has moved to ease restrictions, if not to "unleash" the intelligence agencies. It reduced from eight to two the number of committees to which the agencies had to report, and is likely, in the coming session, to curtail Freedom of Information Act access and to impose sanctions against persons such as Agee, who publish the names of agents.

Courts More Favorable

The courts seem similarly inclined to favor CIA legal positions, ruling for example that former agents must turn over all profits of books if they publish, contrary to their signed contracts, without submitting them first to the CIA for clearance.

But how soon, or even whether, the U.S. intelligence community can be reinvigorated—under proper control and congressional supervision—cannot be predicted. To many, the key will be the quality of new leadership provided by the Reagan Administration.

The nomination of William J. Casey to be the new director of central intelligence has been generally praised within the community because of Casey's service in the CIA's precursor agency, the Office of Strategic Services, and because of his close rapport with the President-elect.

However, Casey at 67 years of age probably will rely on his deputy—and no nomination for the deputy position has yet been announced.